

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed April 21, 2006, and made final, has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendment is made in consequence thereof.

Claims 1-2, 4-12, and 14-20 are now pending in this application. Claims 1, 2, 4-13, and 15-20 stand rejected. Claim 3 is objected to. Claim 14 is withdrawn from consideration. Further, Claims 3 and 13 are canceled. Withdrawn Claim 14 is amended.

The rejection of Claims 1, 2, and 4-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over either Clarke (U.S. Patent No. 1,772,207) or Roberts (U.S. Patent No. 4,329,859) in view of either Germany'076 (Germany 1,958,076) or Bochan (U.S. Patent 4,328,600) is respectfully traversed.

Clarke describes a washing machine that includes a clothes receiving drum (5) having perforated walls. The interior of the drum is provided with triangularly shaped baffle plates (49) with inner edges inclined downwardly and away from the axis of the drum. As best understood from Figures 2 and 8 in the drawings, the baffle plates are not shown as extending radially inward. Notably, Clarke does not describe, nor do the drawings show perforations arranged in single vertically aligned columns between adjacent baffles.

Roberts describes a washing machine (10) having a cabinet (12), a base portion (14) and a top (16). A stationary tub (32) is within the cabinet. A basket (34) for receiving articles to be washed is located within the tub. The basket is of two piece construction including a bottom (36) and a body (38). The body includes a plurality of apertures (42) and a plurality of spaced vertical ribs (44) that extend inwardly from the basket side wall. The bottom includes a plurality of spaced vertical ribs (46) extending inwardly from the bottom of the basket. Notably, Roberts does not describe or suggest ribs that extend radially inward from the basket side wall. Moreover from Figure 2 in the drawings, it is apparent that the ribs include an edge or face that faces along the basket inner wall surface and a surface that tapers from the edge back to the basket wall.

Bochan describes a washing machine (10) including a cabinet (12) having a base (portion (14) and a top (16)). The washing machine includes a perforate basket (32) having perforations (34). The basket includes a bottom section (52) having a plurality of apertures (54) therein and an outer, generally cylindrical, perforate sidewall (56) extending upwardly from the bottom section. The outer sidewall includes a plurality of vertically extending ribs (58) that protrude radially inwardly. Columns of perforations are shown between the vertically extending ribs.

Germany'076, as best understood, describes a washing machine drum with V-shaped plastics projections. The ends of the legs of the V-shaped projections have catches which point outwards and engage the inside surface of the drum when the former is pushed through a U-shaped slot in the drum surface.

Claim 3 was indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 1 has been amended to include all of the limitations of Claim 3. Claim 3 has been canceled. Claim 1 is therefore submitted to be patentable over either Clarke or Roberts in view of either Germany'076 or Bochan.

Claims 2 and 4-5 depend from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 2 and 4-5 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 2 and 4-5 are likewise patentable over either Clarke or Roberts in view of either Germany'076 or Bochan.

Claim 6 recites a washing machine basket including "an outer wall having an outer surface; a plurality of ribs projecting radially inwardly from said outer wall, each said rib comprising a first end and a second end, said first end projecting a first radial distance from said outer wall, said second end projecting a second radial distance from said outer wall, said first radial distance less than said second radial distance; a plurality of apertures formed in said outer wall, said apertures arranged in single vertically aligned columns between adjacent ribs; and a plurality of circumferential support bands extending outwardly from said ribs to a position substantially flush with said outer surface".

None of Clarke, Roberts, Germany'076, or Bochan describes or suggests a washing machine basket as recited in Claim 6. More specifically, none of Clarke, Roberts, Germany'076, or Bochan describes or suggests a basket having radially extending ribs and a plurality of circumferential support bands extending outwardly from the ribs to a position substantially flush with an outer surface of the basket outer wall. Rather, Clarke describes a basket with triangular baffles and no support band. Roberts describes a basket having no support band. Germany'076 describes a drum with V-shaped projections. Bochan describes a basket with inwardly extending rings or vanes. Accordingly, Claim 6 is submitted to be patentable over either Clarke or Roberts in view of either Germany'076 or Bochan.

Claims 7-9 depend from independent Claim 6. When the recitations of Claims 7-9 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 6, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 7-9 are likewise patentable over either Clarke or Roberts in view of either Germany'076 or Bochan.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the section 103(a) rejection of Claims 1, 2, and 4-9 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 10, 12, and 15-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over either Gorn (U.S. Patent 1,657,963) in view of either Germany'201 (Germany 33 17-201) or Bochan (U.S. Patent 4,328,600) is respectfully traversed.

Bochan is described above. Gorn describes a combined washer and water extraction apparatus. The apparatus includes a tank (1) having a cylindrical body portion (2). A receptacle or basket is arranged within the tank and includes a perforated container (83) having a closed perforated end (84) and an open end. The container has non-perforated portions (85), (86), (87), and (88) that extend from a non-perforated portion (89). The non-perforated portions (85) to (88) from the open end of the container to the closed end are inset to form agitators (90), each of which is V-shaped in cross section. The container includes tapered portions (91) and (92). A collar (93) surrounds the container adjacent the tapered portion (91). A series of reinforcing bars (105) are secured to the outer face of the container. The container is provided with a shifting device for tilting the basket from a vertical to a horizontal position. Notably, Gorn describes or

suggests no dimensions associated with an inward projection of the agitators (90). It is also apparent from the drawings, particularly Figure 7, that the perforations cannot be arranged in single vertically arranged columns between adjacent agitators.

Germany'201, as best understood, describes a washing machine drum with V-shaped plastic driving ribs(2). The free edges of the ribs bear the drum casing (1') and have catches (5) which engage behind the drum casing. Notably, none of drawings show a circumferential support band.

Claim 10 recites a washing machine basket including "an outer wall and a plurality of vertically extending ribs projecting radially inwardly from said outer wall at a distance of about 0.395 to about 1.5 inches, said outer wall including a plurality of apertures therethrough, said apertures arranged in single vertically aligned columns between adjacent ribs; and wherein each said rib comprises a first side and a second side, said basket further comprising at least one circumferential support band extending between said first side and said second side, said band extending from said outer wall".

None of Gorn, Germany'201, or Bochan describe or suggest a washing machine basket as recited in Claim 10. More specifically, none of Gorn, Germany'201, or Bochan describe or suggest a basket having radially extending ribs and a circumferential support band extending outwardly between a first and second side of the ribs. Rather, Gorn describes a collar that surrounds a container adjacent a tapered portion. Germany'201 describes a drum with V-shaped plastic driving ribs having catches which engage behind the drum casing. Bochan describes a basket with inwardly extending rings or vanes. Accordingly, Claim 10 is submitted to be patentable over Gorn in view of either Germany'201 or Bochan.

Claims 12 and 15 depend from independent Claim 10. When the recitations of Claims 12 and 15 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 10, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 12 and 15 are likewise patentable over Gorn in view of either Germany'201 or Bochan.

Claim 16 recites a washing machine basket including "a substantially cylindrical outer wall and a plurality of inwardly projecting ribs depending therefrom, each said rib comprising: a

first portion having a first radially extending height from said outer wall and a first tangential width; and a second portion having a second radially extending height from said outer wall and a second tangential width, said first height less than said second height, said first width greater than said second width; wherein, said outer wall includes a plurality of apertures therethrough, said apertures arranged in single vertically aligned columns between adjacent ribs; and wherein said rib comprises a first side and a second side, said basket further comprising at least one circumferential support band extending between said first side and said second side, said band extending from said outer wall”.

None of Gorn, Germany’201, or Bochan describe or suggest a washing machine basket as recited in Claim 16. More specifically, none of Gorn, Germany’201, or Bochan describe or suggest a basket having radially extending ribs and a circumferential support band extending outwardly between a first and second side of the ribs. Rather, Gorn describes a collar that surrounds a container adjacent a tapered portion. Germany’201 describes a drum with V-shaped plastic driving ribs having catches which engage behind the drum casing. Bochan describes a basket with inwardly extending rings or vanes. Accordingly, Claim 16 is submitted to be patentable over Gorn in view of either Germany’201 or Bochan.

Claims 17-18 depend from independent Claim 16. When the recitations of Claims 17-18 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 16, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 17-18 are likewise patentable over Gorn in view of either Germany’201 or Bochan.

Claim 19 recites a washing machine including “a cabinet; and a basket rotatably mounted in said cabinet, said basket comprising an outer wall and a plurality of radially inwardly projecting ribs extending from said outer wall, said ribs having a varying width between ends thereof, said basket further including a plurality of apertures therethrough, said apertures arranged in single vertically aligned columns between adjacent ribs; and wherein each said rib comprises a first side and a second side, said basket further comprising at least one circumferential support band extending between said first side and said second side, said band extending from said outer wall”.

None of Gorn, Germany'201, or Bochan describe or suggest a washing machine basket as recited in Claim 19. More specifically, none of Gorn, Germany'201, or Bochan describe or suggest a basket having radially extending ribs and a circumferential support band extending outwardly between a first and second side of the ribs. Rather, Gorn describes a collar that surrounds a container adjacent a tapered portion. Germany'201 describes a drum with V-shaped plastic driving ribs having catches which engage behind the drum casing. Bochan describes a basket with inwardly extending rings or vanes. Accordingly, Claim 19 is submitted to be patentable over Gorn in view of either Germany'201 or Bochan.

Claim 20 depends from independent Claim 19. When the recitations of Claim 20 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 19, Applicants submit that dependent Claim 20 is likewise patentable over Gorn in view of either Germany'201 or Bochan.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the section 103(a) rejection of Claims 10, 12, and 15-20 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the applied prior art as applied to Claim 10 above, and further in view of Pecker (U.S. Patent No. 2,056,888) is respectfully traversed.

Gorn, Germany'201, and Bochan are described above. Pecker describes a centrifugal separating machine for dewatering sludge. The machine includes a lower section (1), upper and lower intermediate sections (2) and (3) respectively, and a top section (4). A rotary centrifugal basket (5) is located between the intermediate sections. The basket includes a seepage plate (49) with a screen (57) that includes perforations (59).

Applicants respectfully submit that the Section 103 rejection of the presently pending claims is not a proper rejection. As is well established, obviousness cannot be established by combining the teachings of the cited art to produce the claimed invention, absent some teaching, suggestion, or incentive supporting the combination. None of Gorn, Germany'201, Bochan or Pecker, considered alone or in combination, describe or suggest the claimed combination.

To establish prima facie obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. In re *Royka*, 490 F.2d 981, 180 USPQ 580 (CCPA 1974). In the present case, none of Gorn, Germany'201, Bochan or Pecker, considered alone or in combination describe or suggest a basket for a clothes washer that includes ribs with a circumferential support band extending outwardly between a first and second side of the ribs.

Pecker is cited for its teaching of flared perforations, however, the Pecker apparatus in no way relates to contemporary washers. Thus, no motivation can be shown in the references themselves for combining the references. For these reasons alone, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 103 rejection be withdrawn.

Nevertheless, Claim 11 depends from Claim 10 which recites a washing machine basket including "an outer wall and a plurality of vertically extending ribs projecting radially inwardly from said outer wall at a distance of about 0.395 to about 1.5 inches, said outer wall including a plurality of apertures therethrough, said apertures arranged in single vertically aligned columns between adjacent ribs; and wherein each said rib comprises a first side and a second side, said basket further comprising at least one circumferential support band extending between said first side and said second side, said band extending from said outer wall".

None of Gorn, Germany'201, Bochan, or Pecker describes or suggests a washing machine basket as recited in Claim 10. More specifically, none of Gorn, Germany'201, Bochan, or Pecker describes or suggests a basket having radially extending ribs and a circumferential support band extending outwardly between a first and second side of the ribs. Rather, Gorn describes a collar that surrounds a container adjacent a tapered portion. Germany'201 describes a drum with V-shaped plastic driving ribs having catches which engage behind the drum casing. Bochan describes a basket with inwardly extending rings or vanes. Pecker merely describes flared perforations. Accordingly, Claim 10 is submitted to be patentable over Gorn in view of either Germany'201 or Bochan and further in view of Pecker.

Claim 11 depends from independent Claim 10. When the recitations of Claim 11 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 10, Applicants submit that dependent

Claim 11 is likewise patentable over Gorn in view of either Germany'201 or Bochan and further in view of Pecker.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the section 103 rejection of Claim 11 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gorn in view of Josselyn (U.S. Patent No. 913,506) is respectfully traversed.

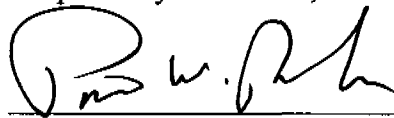
Claim 13 has been canceled. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the section 103 rejection of Claim 13 be withdrawn.

The objection to Claim 3 is respectfully traversed.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter in dependent Claim 3. Claim 3 depends from independent Claim 1. Claim 3 has been canceled and Claim 1 has been amended to include all of the recitations of Claim 3. Claim 1 is therefore submitted to be patentable over the cited art. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to Claim 3 be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,



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